

*This message is sent on behalf of Jeremy Haefner, Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs*

Colleagues,

I'm pleased to share with you some recent data from the Innovative Learning Institute regarding online enrollment, course availability, and faculty resources.

The Innovative Learning Institute (ILI) houses two units, Teaching and Learning Services and RIT Online. Formed in November 2012, the ILI helps to extend RIT's reach in the online area, to grow online enrollments, and facilitate the adoption of technology in teaching and learning. At the outset of this endeavor, many people had the misconception that online classes were somehow inferior to traditional, in-person classes. As you will see in the data below, the ILI has made considerable growth in RIT's online education portfolio since the semester conversion, and demonstrated the profound impact that online education and academic technology can have on student outcomes and faculty teaching.

- Student enrollment in online courses has risen 30% (an increase of 1,155 students), with an increase of 27% from 6,636 to 8,426 in the total enrollment of online courses.
- A 27% increase in the number of online course sections offered, representing 10% of all course sections – a number that is growing each year.
- Student credit hours generated grew 22%, now representing 5.9% of the total generated by RIT (excluding global campuses).
- 27% of our student body took at least one online course in the 2015-16 academic year, up from 23% the year prior.
- The total number of full-time faculty teaching online courses has risen 16%. 260 full-time faculty taught online last year- a number that is expected to continue growing each year.
- A 39% growth in online-only students last year alone.

There are a record number of students participating in online courses at RIT, and more students are taking part in multiple online courses across semesters. These numbers reflect strong student demand for this mode of instruction. There are also higher online enrollments in the form of unique student headcounts than in the peak years prior to semester conversion. Our enrollment numbers continue to grow, reflecting gains in efficiency, awareness, and the quality of online instruction.

The efforts of the ILI, specifically those of Teaching and Learning Services (TLS), have been substantial in inspiring faculty who have not taught online and by connecting faculty to experienced online peers and best practices in the application of both online and classroom technologies. In order to complete this task, TLS created and/or retooled several faculty training programs and resources, including:

[GOLD –Guided Online Learning Development](#)—a program for faculty who want to transform their curriculum to provide more robust online learning experiences for their students

[Instructional Media Film Festival](#)—an annual faculty film festival which celebrates faculty-made learning assets for use in both campus and online classes

[Teachers on Teaching](#)—a seminar series where faculty can share their experiences in the classroom, both online and on campus, with 15-40 participants and 200 faculty alumni

[Teaching and Learning Commons](#)—an online resource for professors to share best practices, ask questions, and get support from their peers

[Online Learning Summit](#)—an annual, in-person event to collect information on the aspirations, joys, and concerns of teaching in the online environment

[Teaching and Learning Symposium](#)—a mini-conference where faculty can learn from their peers throughout the university to address issues that impact faculty

[Provost's Learning Innovation Grants](#) (PLIG)—a program that has been redesigned to better showcase faculty innovations and disseminate successful strategies and projects

The ILI has been an advocate for online instruction and technology in the classroom, and continues to invest in upgrades to classroom technology across campus.

For online students, the vast improvements made by the ILI, specifically RIT Online, can be experienced across a variety of platforms. [The RIT Online \(virtual\) Campus](#), launched this fall, connects online learners across the globe with RIT faculty, staff, resources, and each other. They also introduced [concierge services](#), to ensure that online students—as well as prospective online students—get the timely attention they need from RIT. RIT Online's [new website](#), launched this fall, carefully crafts the user experience with prospective students in mind. Based on user data collected over a two year timeframe, it brings all online [courses](#) and [programs](#) RIT has to offer to the surface. In addition, the ILI played a crucial role in pioneering new, mobile-friendly versions of myCourses (coming late spring) and the course selection process for RIT Online.

In the near future, we can look forward to the following happenings from the ILI:

- A global classroom pilot that will experiment with methods to simultaneously teach across the world, breaking down the barriers between our international campuses, allowing for flexible delivery of content.
- New [edX offerings](#) that will provide new audiences with the opportunity to benefit from RIT faculty expertise.
- An increased portfolio of online courses and programs offered across campus and globally.
- The continued evolution of myCourses, making it more responsive to student and faculty needs.
- Support for faculty in continually raising the bar of educational experiences for our students.

I applaud the ILI's recent successes and look forward to what the future brings.

Sincerely,

Jeremy Haefner  
Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs

*For more information on this and other topics, please visit <http://www.rit.edu/provost/>*